

ATTACHMENT 10

Aerial Photographic Interpretation

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To meaningfully interpret aerial photographic imagery, simultaneously consider both the age and quality of available imagery. The age of imagery is important because features and/or changes in features that have occurred since the imagery was taken cannot be shown. Similarly, an image may show features in a pasture that are no longer present. The quality of the aerial image should be sufficient to be able to identify (or infer) the features listed below. KGLWQP recommends using imagery with at least 1 meter (or better) resolution recent enough to show major features of interest. An example of this imagery (zoomed into a 200 acre parcel) is provided on the next page.

Interpreting Pasture Features from Aerial Photos

[Note the following comments apply to black white aerial imagery]

Roads – can be very useful, particularly to help orient the reader to the image. Roads usually appear as light-toned, very linear elements on an aerial photograph. Often roads occur at regular intervals (such as section roads) and may also be useful for providing a general sense of scale. Pasture roads/trails are often visible on images – especially if they are used frequently.

Vegetation – particularly trees – usually appear as very dark areas on an aerial photograph. Cropped fields are an exception because they are usually lighter in tone than surrounding land. They also usually have distinguishable shapes that follow contours and often contain visible terraces. Pasture land is typically darker than cropped land, but lighter in tone than the vegetated areas typically found along water courses. In addition, there are usually fewer obvious shapes associated with pasture land relative to cropped land.

Water – usually shows up as the darkest areas on an aerial photograph. Ponds are usually easy to pick out, but often the exact path of water courses such as streams are obscured by adjacent trees. Intermittent and/or ephemeral water sources may not be visible at all, but any channel(s) made by these water sources might be discernable in the image.

Fence lines – are usually not directly observable, but the vegetation that usually grows immediately adjacent to the fence – because of its linearity – reveals the fence line. However, vegetation will still be present after a fence line has been removed, so care must be taken in interpreting fence lines from aerial photographs.

Shadows – like water areas, are among the darkest elements observable in an aerial photograph. However, if the aerial photography was taken on an overcast day, shadows may not even be observable in the image. Shadows tend to obscure the true extent of a feature. For example, due to shadows, there may not be as much vegetation along a stream segment as there at first appears. Shadows may also help in locating some feature(s). Windmills, for example, can often be located more easily because of the shadow they cast than by direct observation in the image.

